

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 DAMASC 03356 01 OF 02 271445Z  
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSM-03 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15  
IO-13 EB-07 COME-00 OMB-01 TRSE-00 INT-05 OES-07  
FEAE-00 STR-04 EPG-02 ACDA-07 /099 W  
-----271654Z 082193 /42

R 271358Z MAY 77  
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3272  
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN  
USINT BAGHDAD  
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT  
AMEMBASSY CAIRO  
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM  
AMEMBASSY JIDDA  
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT  
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV  
DIA WASHDC  
SECDEF WASHDC  
USIA WASHDC  
USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 DAMASCUS 3356

E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, SY  
SUBJECT: SYRIA MEDIA SUMMARY FOR MAY 26, 1977

1. SUMMARY: SYRIAN PRESS "CERTAIN" MANDATE QUADRIpartite  
COMMITTEE FOR LEBANON WILL BE EXTENDED. NEWS REPORTS DEALT  
WITH CROWN PRINCE FAHD'S US VISIT IN FACTUAL MANNER INCLUDING  
FAHD'S DENIAL THAT OIL BEING CONTEMPLATED AS WEAPON. TISHRIIN  
EXPRESSED DISPLEASURE WITH ISRAELI STORY THAT US  
HAD PLAN FOR TWO-STAGE ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL WITHIN  
CONTEXT OF FINAL PEACE SETTLEMENT BUT CONCLUDED THAT US COULD  
NOT PRESENT ITS PROPOSALS UNTIL AFTER ISRAELI GOVT. FORMED.

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EDITORIALS GENERALLY PREOCCUPIED WITH LIKUD'S ATTITUDES TOWARDS  
PEACE PROCESS, BUT QUESTION OF INTERNAL CORRUPTION ALSO  
RAISED AGAIN. END SUMMARY.

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

2. PRINCIPAL MEDIA STORIES CONCERNED EXTENSION QUADRIpartite

COMMITTEE MANDATE AND FAHD'S VISIT TO WASHINGTON. AL-BAATH REPORTED IT "CERTAIN" THAT MANDATE FOR QUADRIPARTITE COMMITTEE WILL BE EXTENDED BECAUSE ITS SOLE TASK IS TO ASSIST SARKIS TO IMPLEMENT THE CAIRO AGREEMENT, WHICH NOT COMPLETED.

3. FAHD'S VISIT. TISHRIIN HEADLINED: "WASHINGTON DENIES EXISTENCE OF ANY AMERICAN PLAN FOR ISRAELI PULL-BACK OVER TWO STAGES. CARTER TAKES ARAB OIL OUT OF CALCULATIONS OF THE SETTLEMENT." TISHRIIN GAVE STRAIGHTFORWARD FACTUAL ACCOUNT OF KEY STATEMENTS MADE BY FAHD, CARTER, AND ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS ON ME. ARTICLE NOTED THAT FAHD HAD DENIED THINKING ABOUT USING OIL AS WEAPON. IT FURTHER STATED THAT AT WORKING DINNER FOR FAHD, PRESIDENT CARTER SAID HE HAD EXPRESSED AMERICA'S DEEP COMMITMENT TO ISRAEL'S EXISTENCE IN STATE OF PEACE AND SECURITY. --"THE SAUDIS UNDERSTAND THIS WELL." ADMINISTRATION SOURCE QUOTED SAYING THAT US READY TO SUPPLY SAUDI ARABIA WITH F-15 AND F-16 FIGHTERS. THAWRA GAVE SIMILAR ACCOUNT OF MEETINGS, WHEREAS AL-BAATH, WHETHER BY OVERSIGHT OR INTENT, FAILED TO REPORT FAHD'S DENIAL OF DESIRE TO USE OIL AS WEAPON. MEDIA GAVE PROMINENCE TO CARTER'S REITERATION ON NEED FOR PALESTINIAN HOMELAND.

4. PROMINENT TISHRIIN STORY REFERRED TO ISRAELI NEWS REPORT THAT US PLANS TO RESOLVE ME DISPUTE "BY POSTPONING ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM OCCUPIED TERRITORIES UNTIL ALL DETAILS OF THE SETTLEMENT ARE COMPLETED." ISRAELI STORY CLAIMED WITHDRAWAL WAS TO BE ACCOMPLISHED IN TWO STAGES  
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WITHIN CONTEXT OF FINAL PEACE. TISHRIIN ASSERTED ISRAELI REPORT INTENDED TO SMOKE OUT ADMINISTRATION'S POSITION RE CARTER'S STATEMENTS ABOUT TWO TYPES OF BORDERS (DEFENSIVE AND LEGAL). IT CLAIMED THAT "THE US ADMINISTRATION HAD APPARENTLY REALIZED RISK INVOLVED IN CIRCULATING THE ALLEGED AMERICAN PLAN WHICH WOULD JEOPARDIZE CURRENT CONTACTS AND DENIED THE ISRAELI STORY." TISHRIIN SAID IT HAD BEEN INFORMED BY KNOWLEDGEABLE SOURCES IN WASHINGTON THA US HAS NOT PRESENTED ANY SETTLEMENT PLAN FOR ME. ARTICLE NOTED THAT US NOT LIKELY TO BE IN POSITION TO MAKE PROPOSALS FOR SOLUTION UNTIL NEW ISRAELI CABINET FORMED AND ITS PRIMIN HOLDS CONTACTS WITH CARTER.

5. EDITORIALS ON ISRAEL. ALMOST ALL EDITORIALS DEALT WITH ISRAEL AND PARTICULARLY LIKUD'S INTENTIONS. BAATH COLUMNIST IN WRITING ON POSSIBILITY THAT LIKUD MAY CONTEMPLATE NEW WAR AGAINST THE ARABS SAID: "THE OPTION OF WAR CANNOT BE RULED OUT IN THIS CASE (ISRAEL'S DESIRE TO IMPROVE ITS POSITION.) THIS OPTION NOT ACCEPTABLE INTERNATIONALLY,

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 DAMASCUS 3356

AND OBVIOUSLY REJECTED ON THE ARAB LEVEL. HE WARNED  
THAT THE ARABS WOULD USE THEIR INTERNATIONAL INFLUENCE TO  
THWART ISRAELI USE OF WAR OPTION AND NOTED CLAUSWITZ'S  
DICTUM THAT EVERY ATTACK ENDS IN DEFENSE. ANOTHER  
BAATH EDITORIAL QUESTIONED WHETHER LIKUD-LED GOVERNMENT  
WOULD BE WILLING TO ATTEND GENEVA CONFERENCE AT ALL, LET  
ALONE IN 1977. EDITORIAL IN TISHRIIN WARNED THAT ATTEMPTS  
WOULD BE MADE TO PRESSURE THE ARABS BECAUSE OF NEED TO  
SATISFY ISRAELI "EXTREMISTS." IT SAID THIS PRESSURE WOULD  
REMIND ARABS OF ISRAEL'S 'MILITARY SUPERIORITY' AND LIKELI-  
HOOD THAT LIKUD WOULD EMBARK ON MILITARY ADVENTURES. IT  
CLAIMED ANOTHER FORM OF PRESSURE WOULD BE PUBLICATION OF  
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STATEMENTS THAT ARAB OIL WOULD NOT BE USED AS WEAPON TO BRING ABOUT JUST PEACE. EDITORIAL CALLED UPON ARABS TO TAKE MOVES TO COUNTER THIS PRESSURE.

7. CORRUPTION. THIRD EDITORIAL APPEARED IN LESS THAN TWO WEEKS ON INTERNAL PROBLEMS. EDITORIAL ALLEGED EXISTENCE "NEGLIGENCE AND SLACKENING" WHICH TAKING ADVANTAGE OF LEADERSHIP'S PREOCCUPATION WITH "EXTERNAL EVENTS." IT SAID THAT SIGNS OF GREED, EXPLOITATION, AND ILLEGAL MONEY-MAKING CALL FOR SOMEONE TO RAISE HIS VOICE LOUD AGAINST THEM. IT CONTINUED THAT CALLING ATTENTION TO THIS PROBLEM WAS NECESSARY PRELUDE "TO PROCESS OF CONFRONTATION." COLUMN CONCLUDED THAT IT NECESSARY TO OFFER PRODUCTION FIGURES "BY WHICH WE WOULD EXPOSE SOME ASPECTS OF UNBELIEVABLE WEALTH OF SOME CONTRACTORS AND MERCHANTS."

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COMMENT: APPEARANCE OF THESE ARTICLES SUGGESTS REGIME COGNIZANT OF POPULAR DISSATISFACTION WITH EXCESSES OF SOME SYRIANS HOLDING INFLUENTIAL POSITIONS AND MAY BE LOOKING FOR SCAPEGOATS IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

MURPHY

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## Message Attributes

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